

the panel 20 or alternatively the substrate may be formed from solid stainless steel. It is to be appreciated that other surface configurations could be used as will be appreciated by those skilled in the art.

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Figure 12 illustrates a further variation of the panel when used as part of a flooring system. In this arrangement the reinforcing element 40 acts as an internal bearer thereby providing the required loading characteristics for the flooring system. In this arrangement the upper face 38 incorporates a timber veneer so as to give the impression of a timber floor.

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 13, 20, 33, and 37.

Please amend claims 1, 19, and 21 as follows:

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Sub 1. (Twice Amended) A building panel of sandwich construction comprising a core and a metal sheet substrate fixed to opposite major faces of said core including opposite end edges which extend between and generally perpendicular to said opposite major faces thereof, at least one of said metal sheets having a plasterboard paper covering bonded thereto, and wherein each said metal sheet includes opposite edges which are shaped to form edge regions of the panel, which extend inboard of said opposite major surfaces and across each end edge of said core to provide for innerconnection of the panel with another panel and to form a load bearing region capable of accommodating loading applied to innerconnected panels, each edge region being formed to include a pair of connecting elements which extend across the end edge of said core and which allow for interconnection of the panel with another panel, the connecting elements being formed as either a channel or a projection, the projection of one edge region being configured to interfit within the channel of the other edge region of said another panel, and wherein when interconnected, the major surfaces of the interconnected panels are aligned and generally in abutting relationship to form a substantially continuous exposed surface.

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Sub 19. (Twice Amended) A building system including a building panel and a separate reinforcing element, the building panel comprising a core and having spaced metal sheets fixed to opposite major faces of said core, said core including opposite end

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edges which extend between and generally perpendicular to said opposite major faces thereof, said metal sheets defining opposite major surfaces of said panel, each of said metal sheets including opposite edge regions which form longitudinal edge regions of the panel, wherein said edge regions extend inwardly of said opposite major surfaces of said panel and across each end edge of said core to provide for interconnection of the panel with another panel and to form a load bearing region capable of accommodating loading applied to interconnected panels, and each edge region of the panel is profiled to form a pair of connecting elements which extend across the end edges of said core, the connecting elements of the longitudinal edge regions of the panel being adapted to interfit with the connecting element of a respective one of the longitudinal edge regions of another panel, each connecting element being formed as either a channel or a projection which cooperate to interfit, the panel being configured such that the major surfaces of the interconnected panels are aligned and in substantially abutting relationship to form a substantially continuous surface and wherein the reinforcing element is operative to be installed at a joint formed on connection of the panel with said another panel and is secured in place by locating said reinforcing element between and in connection with the interfitting connecting elements of each panel to conceal the reinforcing element which is operative to improve the load bearing characteristics of the interconnected panels.

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Sub E1 21. (Three Times Amended) A building system according to claim 19, wherein the connecting elements are in the form of interfitting channels and projections, each channel incorporating opposite walls interconnected by a substantially flat base portion, and wherein each projection is shaped to interfit with the channel of said another panel and includes opposite walls interconnected by a substantially flat apical portion, and wherein said reinforcing element includes at least one engagement part which is generally U-shaped and located between said interfitting channel and projection of the interconnected panels.